

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN TEMPLATE

County & Agency Name: Mariposa County Department of Human Services

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This template is intended to be used as a guide to help counties incorporate the 2006 federal disaster response criteria as part of local child welfare plans. Minors in the probation system must also be included in the plan. County plans must be amended to include Child Welfare Services (CWS) Disaster Response Plans and be operational by September 28, 2007.

In September 2006, Congress passed the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (Public Law (PL) 109-288). PL 109-288 amended Part B of Title IV of the Social Security Act to reauthorize the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program. Among other changes, PL 109-288 established requirements for states on disaster planning in child welfare under Section 6 (a) (16). Accordingly, counties are requested to address the following program areas in developing local disaster readiness plans.

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CWS Disaster Response Criteria A:	Identify, locate, and continue availability of services for children under State care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster:
Essential Function:	1. Identification and location process of children who may be displaced
Process Description:	The Child Welfare Administrative Analyst shall maintain a comprehensive list of all children under the care, custody, and control of the Department on a weekly basis utilizing a computer-generated report from Business Objects. This list shall be kept in the Analyst's office and the Social Services Deputy Director's office, labeled, "ER Disaster Child Contact Roster." This list can be accessed in the event of an emergency wherein CWS personnel are required to contact each foster child to ensure his or her safety.

	<p>If possible, during normal working hours, all CWS personnel with an assigned caseload will contact the children and/or their care providers on their assigned caseloads via telephone and/or personal home visits, to ensure the safety of all children. If the assigned CWS staff person is not available, the Officer of the Day or another assigned CWS staff person shall make the contacts.</p> <p>Probation: The Probation Department will keep an updated list of all children in group homes and foster care with names of group homes, addresses and phone numbers. The list will also contain information about special medical or mental health needs of the children in placement and the names, addresses and phone numbers of parents and or guardians. The Deputy Probation Officers are responsible for keeping the information in a secure location for confidentiality purposes.</p> <p>The Deputy Probation Officer or other designated staff will contact each group/foster home provider by telephone to determine the safety and security status of each child or children in his or her care.</p>
Essential Function:	2. Communication process with child care providers
Process Description:	<p>If possible, during normal working hours, all CWS personnel with an assigned caseload will contact the children and/or their care provider on their assigned caseloads via telephone and/or personal home visits, to ensure the safety of all children. If the assigned CWS staff person is not available, the Officer of the Day or another assigned CWS staff person shall make the contacts. Contacts must also be done on behalf of all children placed via the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children for children residing in Mariposa County whereby courtesy supervision services are being provided.</p> <p>Probation: In the event of a disaster, the Deputy Probation Officer or other designated staff will contact each group/foster home provider by telephone to determine the safety and security status of each child or children in his or her care. If the Probation Department is satisfied that the safety and security of the child is not in jeopardy, the child/children will remain with the provider.</p>
Essential Function:	3. Identification of evacuation procedures – Event known in advance
Process Description:	In addition to the Mariposa County Emergency Plan and the Department of Human Services Disaster Plan, Child Welfare Services will continue to provide services as outlined in this document.

Essential Function:	4. Identification of evacuation procedures – Event not known in advance
Process Description:	In addition to the Mariposa County Emergency Plan and the Department of Human Services Disaster Plan, Child Welfare Services will continue to provide services as outlined in this document.
Essential Function:	5. Identification of shelters
Process Description:	<p>Department staff shall be assigned to a designated shelter and/or command post to process the initial intake and registration of unaccompanied minors, as well as make efforts to reunify said children with their parents, legal guardians, or responsible relatives in accordance with regulations and legislation governing child welfare practice, if needed.</p> <p>If a child becomes displaced due to a disaster (foster child or unaccompanied minor), personnel will first attempt to locate family members for immediate placement. If no appropriate relative is located, personnel shall locate foster homes for the child(ren). The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children Administrator in a sending state shall be contacted regarding children placed in Mariposa County under courtesy supervision.</p> <p>Probation: Children who cannot be returned to their parent(s) or guardian(s) will be temporarily housed in a separate unit within the juvenile detention facility. Probation staff will provide around the clock supervision.</p>
Essential Function:	6. Parental notification procedures
Process Description:	<p>As soon as possible after ensuring the safety of all children in foster care, Department personnel will make due and diligent efforts to notify parents and/or legal guardians of the safety of their child(ren), unless parental rights have been terminated.</p> <p>Probation: The Deputy Probation Officer will be responsible for contacting parents and advising them of the circumstances and the status of their child(ren).</p>
Essential Function:	7. Alternative processes for providing continued services
Process Description:	CWS staff shall ensure that ongoing case management duties are fulfilled on behalf of all dependent

	<p>children and their families as applicable to current legislation, regulations, and Department policies guiding child welfare practice. Department staff shall be assigned to a designated shelter and/or command post to process the initial intake and registration of unaccompanied minors, as well as make all reasonable efforts to provide supportive services to all children under its care, custody, and control, and those under its temporary care and supervision during the disaster.</p> <p>Probation: The Probation Department will secure a Standing Order for the Juvenile Court to allow for the temporary housing of children in the county juvenile detention facility for the purpose of securing their safety until suitable and safe housing can be established.</p>
Essential Function:	8. Staff assignment process
Process Description:	<p>The Deputy Director of Social Services will determine the staff needed to address the unique needs presented by the emergency. CWS staff shall be assigned to a designated shelter and/or command post to process the initial intake and registration of unaccompanied minors.</p> <p>Probation: The Probation Department will dispatch appropriate staff to the locations where children must be retrieved and relocated.</p>
Essential Function:	9. Workload planning
Process Description:	<p>After ensuring the safety of their own families, CWS staff shall immediately report to their designated stations and conduct their assigned duties and responsibilities, as long as it is safe. If the assigned CWS staff person is not available, the Officer of the Day or another assigned CWS staff person shall ensure caseload coverage. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all caseloads are covered.</p> <p>CWS personnel shall continue searching for placement on behalf of detained children until safe, suitable, and approved/licensed placements are found and made. During the placement search, CWS personnel shall be assigned to rotating shifts for the care and supervision of detained children. The care and supervision site may be a designated shelter or other facility that is safe and has food, water, and proper sanitation for the children.</p> <p>CWS personnel shall assist “unaccompanied minors” resulting from the disaster. These children may be delivered to CWS personnel and sent to emergency shelters. CWS personnel shall make every effort to locate the children’s parents, legal guardians, and/or responsible relatives to whom to release the</p>

	children during or after the disaster. Probation: Probation staff will provide around the clock supervision of children.
Essential Function:	10. Alternative locations for operations
Process Description:	CWS staff will utilize other Department buildings, as needed. Probation: The Probation Department will utilize other county buildings, as needed.
Essential Function:	11. Orientation and ongoing training
Process Description:	All employees will be aware of the Disaster Plan and will respond to it expeditiously to protect the safety and welfare of all staff and children in foster care.
CWS Disaster Response Criteria B:	Respond, as appropriate, to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster, and provide services in those cases:
Essential Function:	1. New child welfare investigation process
Process Description:	Department staff will be assigned to a designated shelter and/or command post and be available for 24 hour, 7 day emergency standby shifts to conduct child abuse and/or neglect referral investigations. Staff located at the shelters shall accept Suspected Child Abuse Reports (SCARs) and respond in accordance with legislation, regulations, and Department policies.
Essential Function:	2. Implementation process for providing new services
Process Description:	CWS staff shall provide pre-placement preventative services and/or foster care placement services, as needed, and as regulated by current legislation, regulations, and Department policies. In the event of an emergency, foster care eligibility worker(s) shall be called upon to process funds for foster homes, which can include, but are not limited to, clothing and special/emergency needs.
CWS Disaster Response Criteria C:	Remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster:

Essential Function:	1. Communication structure – staff
Process Description:	The disaster plan will be activated by direction from the Mariposa County Department of Human Services Director or his/her designee. In the event of a disaster, all line staff who are in a safe area are to contact their supervisor for emergency assignments.
Essential Function:	2. Communication structure – child welfare personnel (phone tree)
Process Description:	<p>The Director will initiate the Disaster Plan procedures. In the event that the Director becomes incapacitated, the Deputy Director of Social Services or his/her designee may initiate the Disaster Plan. The Deputy Director will contact the supervisors, who will contact line staff.</p> <p>Probation: In the event of a disaster, the Chief Probation Officer will activate the Disaster Plan and will coordinate communication. The Probation Department will utilize the phone tree process already in place to contact all available staff to respond for implementation of emergency services to children in placement.</p>
Essential Function:	3. Communication structure – contracted services
Process Description:	<p>The Disaster Plan telephone tree will be updated regularly to reflect current staff telephone numbers and emergency contacts. Community Link is an information and referral service in Mariposa County with a toll free number and 24 hour/7 day a week website availability. The toll free number is 1-877-256-LINK (5465).</p> <p>Probation: The phone tree will be updated regularly. The Probation Department may also utilize two-way radio equipment in the even of telephone service disruption.</p>
Essential Function:	4. Communication process when all normal channels are unavailable
Process Description:	CWS and Probation: Those who have cell phones, pagers, and/or radios, are to turn them on and keep them available for use, as needed.
Essential Function:	5. Communication frequency
Process Description:	Staff will be kept abreast of all new information as soon as the same is known to the Director, Deputy Director, and supervisor.

Essential Function:	6. Communication with media
Process Description:	Communication with the media will be authorized by the Mariposa County Office of Emergency Services.
Essential Function:	7. Communication with volunteers
Process Description:	Communication will be coordinated through the County's Emergency Plan. Community Link is an information and referral service in Mariposa County with a toll free number and 24 hour/7 day a week website access via computer. The toll free number is 1-877-256-LINK (5465)
Essential Function:	8. Establishment of a toll-free number prior to disaster (include TTY)
Process Description:	The Mariposa County Office of Emergency Services will provide a toll free number to the public.
CWS Disaster Response Criteria D:	Preserve essential program records:
Essential Function:	1. Record preservation process
Process Description:	All eligibility functions and Child Welfare Services documentation is primarily available via computer.
Essential Function:	2. Use of off-site back-up system
Process Description:	The CWS/CMS system can be accessed through various computers throughout the County and the State. Probation: The probation database can be accessed via computer.
CWS Disaster Response Criteria E:	Coordinate services and share information with other states:
Essential Function:	1. Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children reporting process
Process Description:	Contacts must be done on behalf of all children placed via the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children for children residing in Mariposa County whereby courtesy supervision services are being provided. The CWS staff person assigned to the case will be responsible for contacting the other State where the child is a dependent, to keep them updated on the whereabouts of the child(ren) and to

	arrange for transportation back to said State, if necessary.
Essential Function:	2. Mental health providers
Process Description:	Mariposa County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services may be called upon to provide mental health services during and after a disaster. Community Link is also available for information and referrals via a toll free number and website access. The toll free number is 1-877-256-LINK (5465).
Essential Function:	3. Courts
Process Description:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Active efforts to follow all court orders made prior to the disaster will be made. 2. In the event of a life threatening situation, CWS staff will require the approval of the Director or Deputy Director to act in opposition to an existing court order. A court report will be filed as soon as possible explaining why the applicable court order could not be followed. 3. If time allows, a court order shall be sought for all emergency situations. 4. All other rights given to caretakers and parents by statute apply during a disaster situation. 5. In the event of a child death, CWS staff shall contact the immediate supervisor or Deputy Director to notify the same and get further instructions. 6. CWS personnel shall document all efforts, services, contacts, and results in CWS/CMS when reasonably possible. Handwritten notes shall be kept until it is possible to enter the data. 7. Welfare and Institutions Code petitions and reports must be prepared and filed within statutory guidelines during and after a disaster in the event that the court system is functioning. The Department is still held to statutory requirements for the detention of children if court days are being counted in the County. All other legal and civil rights accorded to children and their families will also continue to apply during or after a disaster; therefore, CWS personnel will make active efforts to comply with those regulations.

Essential Function:	4. Federal partners
Process Description:	Federal partners will be engaged through the County Disaster Plan. The Department, as appropriate, will work with federal partners.
Essential Function:	5. CDSS
Process Description:	The Department will work with the State to ensure the safety and well being of children located in Mariposa County.
Essential Function:	6. Tribes
Process Description:	Tribes will be notified in the same fashion as parents and legal guardians regarding the safety and well being of Indian children. If another home/location is needed for tribal children, the tribe will immediately be contacted for placement options. Whenever possible, preference will be given to the tribe.
Essential Function:	7. Volunteers
Process Description:	All volunteers will be coordinated through the County Disaster Plan.